

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 186635

EXDIS FROM UNA

FOL RPT PARIS 23058 SENT ACTION SECSTATE RABAT INFO ALGIERS
NOUAKCHOTT ROME MADRID JIDDA JUL 21, 1978

QUOTE: S E C R E T PARIS 23058

EXDIS

ROME FOR MOOSE, RABAT ALSO FOR SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, MO, MR, SS, FR

SUBJ: POSSIBLE CREATION OF NEW STATE IN SAHARA

REF: RABAT 4403

1. IN CONVERSATION JULY 21 WITH UNDER SECRETARY
NEWSOM, MFA SECRETARY GENERAL SOUTOU CONFIRMED (REFTEL)
THAT MAURITANIAN ENVOY TO PARIS HAD INDICATED THE
POSSIBILITY OF A SAHARAN STATE IN THE MAURITANIAN POR-
TION OF THE SAHARA. MAURITANIAN MINISTER OF EQUIPMENT,
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OULD SIDI,TOLD FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD
THAT SUCH A STATE MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE TO MOROCCO SINCE
IT WOULD HAVE NO COMMON BORDER WITH ALGERIA. MOROCCO
WOULD OF COURSE KEEP ITS PIECE OF THE SAHARA.

2. PRESIDENT GISCARD'S AFRICAN ADVISOR, RENE JOURNIAC,
ELABORATED ON THIS SOMEWHAT AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING

AT THE ELYSEE. HE SAID THAT OULD SIDI HAD COME TO PARIS TO TELL FRANCE THAT MAURITANIA WANTS TO GET OUT OF THE WAR AND TO ENLIST FRANCE'S ASSISTANCE. OULD SIDI WAS TOLD BY THE FRENCH THAT TALKS WITH THE ALGERIANS COULD NOT LONG REMAIN SECRET FROM THE MOROCCANS EVEN IF THE ALGERIANS DIDN'T CHOOSE TO MAKE THEM PUBLIC. MOREOVER, IT WOULD BE USELESS TO TALK DIRECTLY WITH THE POLISARIO AS THEY COULD DO NOTHING WITHOUT ALGERIAN APPROVAL. MAURITANIA'S PROBLEM NOW IS WITH THE MOROCCANS. OULD SIDI ASKED IF FRANCE, AS A GREAT POWER, MIGHT TALK TO THE MOROCCANS IN MAURITANIA'S BEHALF. THE FRENCH RESPONSE WAS ESSENTIALLY NEGATIVE, TO THE EFFECT THAT FRANCE IS NOT IN A POSITION TO GO TO THE PARTIES NOW AND SUGGEST SOLUTIONS. THE MAURITANIANS WERE ENCOURAGED TO TALK DIRECTLY TO THE MOROCCANS.

3. JOURNIAC WAS ASKED IF HE THOUGHT MAURITANIAN WILLINGNESS TO SEE A SAHARAN STATE ESTABLISHED IN ITS PORTION OF THE FORMER SPANISH SAHARA OFFERED A POSSIBLE SOLUTION. JOURNIAC SAID HE DOUBTED THIS WOULD BE ATTRACTIVE TO THE MOROCCANS. AT THE SAME TIME, A SOLUTION IS IN THE MOROCCAN INTEREST AND THEY SHOULD BEGIN TO CONSIDER HOW TO END THE CONFLICT. IF THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY ARE, AND GIVEN THE MAURITANIAN DESIRE TO GET OUT, MOROCCO WILL SOONER OR LATER FIND ITSELF
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OBLIGED TO ASSUME DIRECT POWER IN NOUAKCHOTT. THIS WOULD TURN BLACK AFRICA AGAINST HASSAN AND GREATLY WEAKEN HIS INTERNATIONAL POSITION.

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS AS TO WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP IN THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION, JOURNIAC SAID THAT THE SPANISH MIGHT BE ABLE TO PLAY SOME ROLE AND OUGHT TO BE WILLING, AS THEY BEAR SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS. THE SAUDIS COULD CERTAINLY MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION AT SOME POINT. IF THE MOROCCANS AND THE MAURITANIANS ARE ABLE TO COME UP WITH SOME KIND OF SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL, AS FOR INSTANCE THE CREATION OF A SMALL SAHARAN STATE, THE SAUDIS COULD BE DECISIVE IN OBLIGING THE ALGERIANS TO ACCEPT. AND IN THIS CASE EVEN THE MEDDLESOME QADHAFI MIGHT FOR ONCE BE HELPFUL.

5. WHEN NEWSOM INFORMED JOURNIAC THAT ONE OF THE PRIMARY PURPOSES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS' PRESENT VISIT TO RABAT IS TO DISCUSS THE F-5 AIRCRAFT IN MAURITANIA IN VIOLATION OF US-MOROCCAN AGREEMENTS, JOURNIAC REPLIED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PLANES

WOULD CAUSE NO PROBLEMS FOR FRANCE. HE COMMENTED
DRILY THAT THE MOROCCANS DON'T SEEM TO KNOW HOW TO
USE THEM IN ANY CASE. HARTMAN
UNQUOTE VANCE

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